of forests. These guidelines are acted upon by the States as per the provisions of the constitution. As per the provisions of National Forest Policy 1988, Government of India had issued guidelines to the State Governments on June 1, 1990 for involving village communities in the protection and regeneration of degrated forest lands under Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme. As reported by various State Governments 22 States have issued Government resolutions in this regard and 10.249 million ha. of forest area in these States has been covered under JFM programme. Government of India has issued fresh guidelines on February 21, 2000 to further strengthen the JFM programme in the country. To ensure that State Governments follow guidelines issued by the Union Government, the matter is continuously monitored and discussed at various forums in meetings held with State Government representatives from time to time. Regional offices of the Ministry of Environment and Forests also do the monitoring to ensure that the guidelines are followed in the States.

Priorities of National Forest Scheme

†3442. SHRI KAPIL SIBAL:
DR. D. MASTHAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had formulated a new National Forest Scheme in 1998;

(b) if so, the details of priorities fixed therein;

(c) whether any scheme has since been formulated for programme implementation under the policy; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) The question does not arise in view of (a) above.

Rights of Tribal People on Forest Land

†3443. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per the latest amendment made in the Forest

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(Conservation) Act, tribal people have no right on their own forests, water and land; and

(b) if so, whether Government would make amendment in this law?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 only regulates the use of forest land for non-forestry purposes. It does not deal with the ownership or rights of the people including the tribals. However, while diverting any forest land for non-forestry activities under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, due regard is given to the impact of the project on the local people particularly the tribals.

(b) Does not arise.

Poaching in Rajaji National Park

3444. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether poaching of rare animals like musk deer, leopard and other big cats and organised "loot" of medicinal plants and precious timber have been reported in Rajaji National Park in Uttar Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the action taken against the forest guards who are in league with Mafia gangs, for organised loot of the precious wealth of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) As reported by the State Government, no poaching of musk deer, leopard or big cats has been reported in Rajaji National Park during the last five years. Although some stray cases of illicit felling of trees have been detected in the parks, no cases of organised loot of medicinal plants and precious timber has been reported.

(b) Does not arise.

Ecological Task Force

3445. SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some proposals to raise Ecological Task Force were sent by Himachal Pradesh Government;